

including the initial step of hydroforming a first side rail so as to have an integrally formed mounting structure. A second side rail and a cross member are provided, and the cross member is secured to the side rails. Lastly, a component of the vehicle is connected to the integrally formed mounting structure of the first side rail. This method is neither shown nor suggested in the Jacobs et al. reference.

Rather, the Jacobs et al. reference discloses a method for manufacturing a vehicle frame assembly including the steps of hydroforming first and second side rails and connecting a cross member between such side rails. However, the Jacobs et al. reference does not show or suggest the steps of hydroforming a first side rail so as to have an integrally formed mounting structure or connecting a component of the vehicle to the integrally formed mounting structure of the first side rail.

The Jacobs et al. reference does disclose the step of forming a plurality of hydroformed corrugations 408 in a tubular member as a configuration that "provides the formed tubular member with a shape that causes an axial collapse at near constant forces ... [which] advantageously functions to enhance shock absorbing characteristics of the frame assembly in the event of a forward collision" (see Col. 10, Lines 45-51). However, this structure has no relevance whatsoever to the claimed method for mounting components on the vehicle frame assembly. Thus, the Jacobs et al. reference clearly does not anticipate the claimed invention. In addition, because it contains no teaching or suggestion of hydroforming closed structural members to form side rails having integrally formed mounting structures or attaching structures thereto, the Jacobs et al. reference is insufficient to render the claimed invention obvious under 35 U.S.C. §103. Claim 11 defines the invention in a similar manner and is believed to be patentable for the same reasons. None of the other references are believed to show or suggest the claimed structure as well.

In view of the amendments, it is believed that the application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, an early Notice Of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard S. MacMillan", written over a horizontal line.

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